



Disaster and Emergency Management Resources

Disaster Safety – Downed Power Lines

- Disasters of all types can cause power lines to fall to the ground causing a potentially deadly hazard.
- Never touch, move, or go near any kind of downed or hanging line, even if it looks harmless. Getting near it could cause a severe injury or even death.
- Do not put your feet into a flooded street or even a puddle where a downed line is lying. In some instances, wet or snow-covered ground can conduct electricity.
- Do not try to move tree limbs that are on or near power line. Anything touching a downed line may be dangerous.
- Immediately report a downed line to your local utility company's emergency center and also call your local police.
- If you see someone who has been shocked and is in direct or indirect contact with a downed power line, do not try to touch the person. Efforts to move an electric shock victim could make you a second victim.
- If a power line falls on a car, you should stay inside the vehicle. This is the safest place to stay under the circumstances. Honk your horn to alert passersby. Roll down the window and warn people not to touch the car or the line. Ask someone to call the local utility company and emergency services.
- The only circumstance in which you should consider leaving a car that is in contact with a downed power line is if the vehicle catches on fire; open the door, but do not step out. Make sure that you jump completely free of the vehicle with both feet together to avoid contact with the live car (metal) and the ground at the same time. Hop as far away as possible from the vehicle keeping both feet together.

Adapted from resource material developed by the National Weather Service